

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4038
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 20886

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: CDU AND CSU AGREE AT LAST MOMENT TO FORM
JOINT FRAKTION IN THE 8TH BUNDESTAG

REFS: A. MUNICH 3039 (NOTAL); B. BONN 20744 (NOTAL);
C. BONN 20580

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN AN 11TH HOUR REVERSAL, THE CDU AND
CSU DECIDED TO FORM A JOINT FRAKTION IN THE 8TH
BUNDESTAG. THE DECISION CAME FOLLOWING A DECEMBER 12
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MEETING IN BONN BETWEEN KOHL AND STRAUSS. UNDER THE

NEW FRAKTION AGREEMENT, SOME OF THE DE FACTO POWERS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY THE CSU WERE CODIFIED AND THE CDU AGREED NOT TO MOVE INTO BAVARIA. IN RETURN THE CSU AGREED TO A JOINT FRAKTION UNDER KOHL'S LEADERSHIP, AND NOT TO COMPETE WITH THE CDU IN OTHER LAENDER.

ALSO, UNDER THE NEW AGREEMENT THERE WILL BE A JOINT CDU/CSU COMMITTEE WITH EQUAL REPRESENTATION FROM BOTH PARTIES TO DECIDE ON LONG-TERM STRATEGY. THE CDU WILL NOMINATE THE JOINT FRAKTION'S CANDIDATE FOR BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT, AND THE CSU THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT FORMER CDU/CSU FRAKTION CHAIRMAN CARSTENS WILL BE THE CDU/CSU PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND STUECKLEN THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT THE CDU/FDP COALITIONS ON THE LAND LEVEL WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO UNDERMINE THE CDU/CSU NATIONAL POLICIES.

BOTH SIDES CLAIM VICTORY IN THE DISPUTE. HOWEVER, EVEN IF STRAUSS ALWAYS HAD THIS OPTION AS A FALL-BACK POSITION, KOHL'S FIRMNESS AND THE CDU'S READINESS TO MOVE INTO BAVARIA WERE KEY FACTORS IN BRINGING ABOUT THE CSU'S REVERSAL OF THE KREUTH DECISION. ALTHOUGH THE CDU CHAIRMAN WILL HAVE HIS HANDS FULL AS FRAKTION CHAIRMAN UNDER THE NEW CONDITIONS, HE IS CLEARLY BETTER OFF THAN HE WOULD HAVE BEEN HAD THE TWO PARTIES REMAINED DIVIDED IN THE BUNDESTAG. END SUMMARY.

1. MEETING ON DECEMBER 12, CDU CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL AND CSU CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS HAMMERED OUT A NEW CDU/CSU AGREEMENT BASED ON THE PROPOSALS STRAUSS HAD MADE DECEMBER 9 (MUNICH 3039). BASICALLY, THE CSU CONDITIONS FOR A FOUR-YEAR JOINT FRAKTION CODIFY THE DE FACTO POWER RELATIONSHIPS THAT EXISTED WITHIN THE CDU/CSU FRAKTION IN THE 7TH BUNDESTAG. THE CSU "LANDESGRUPPE" WILL HAVE MORE AUTONOMY, A CDU-CSU COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED WITH EQUAL REPRESENTATION TO DETERMINE UNION PARTIES' STRATEGY AND, ALTHOUGH THE CSU AGREED NOT TO COMPETE WITH THE CDU IN THE VARIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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"BUNDESLAENDER", THE CDU DID AGREE TO LOOK UPON POSSIBLE 4TH PARTY MOVEMENTS WITH MORE SYMPATHY. THE CDU ALSO AGREED NOT TO MOVE INTO BAVARIA. THE CSU UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS CAN PRESENT ITS VIEWS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE CDU IN THE BUNDESTAG.

2. THE LEADER OF THE NEW JOINT FRAKTION WILL BE A MEMBER OF THE CDU (KOHL) AND THE DEPUTY LEADER WILL

COME FROM THE CSU (ZIMMERMANN). THE CDU WILL NOMINATE THE BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT AND THE CSU THE VICE-PRESIDENT. THE CDU/CSU FRAKTION IS EXPECTED TO NOMINATE CARSTENS (CDU) AS THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND STUECKLEN (CSU) AS BUNDESTAG VICE-PRESIDENT. NEW ELECTIONS MUST NOW BE HELD WITHIN THE JOINT FRAKTION AND THE CDU FRAKTION ELECTIONS REPORTED (BONN 20744) ARE VOID.

3. THE 11TH HOUR REVERSAL OF THE CSU DECISION IN

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WILDBAD KREUTH CAME AFTER A HECTIC WEEKEND OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING. STRAUSS' OFFER FOR A JOINT FRAKTION OF DECEMBER 9 CAME AS SOMEWHAT LESS OF A SURPRISE TO THE CDU LEADERSHIP THAN IT DID TO SOME OF STRAUSS' OWN LIEUTENANTS SUCH AS ZIMMERMANN. RUMOR HAD IT IN BONN THURSDAY AFTERNOON THAT STRAUSS MIGHT BE READY TO MAKE A DEAL. AFTER THE CSU CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCED HIS DECEMBER 9 PROPOSAL, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION AMONG THE CDU POLITICIANS WHETHER TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPT IT OR NOT.

4. INTERESTINGLY, SOME OF THE LEFT-WINGERS IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP WERE MORE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE STRAUSS CONDITIONS THAN SOME OF THE LEADING CDU RIGHT-WINGERS. THESE RIGHT-WING CDU POLITICIANS ARE AFRAID THAT STRAUSS WILL GO BACK ON HIS WORD ABOUT 4TH PARTY AMBITIONS AFTER THE 1978 BAVARIAN ELECTIONS. THESE POLITICIANS FEAR THAT STRAUSS HAS BECOME IRRATIONAL AND IS UNPREDICTABLE. IT IS IRONIC THAT THIS VIEW IS BEING HELD BY CDU POLITICIANS WHO SHARE THE BAVARIAN'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

5. BOTH SIDES PORTRAY THE NEW AGREEMENT AS A VICTORY FOR THEIR OWN POSITION. THE BAVARIANS CLAIM THAT THE CSU IS NOW IN A STRONGER POSITION IN THE FRAKTION. THE CDU HAS ALSO AGREED TO PUT RESTRAINTS ON CDU POLITICIANS ESPECIALLY ON THE LAND-LEVEL, WHO MIGHT TRADE UNION PARTIES' MAJORITY CONTROL IN THE BUNDESRAT FOR FDP COALITION AGREEMENTS.

6. CDU POLITICIANS CLAIM THAT KOHL HAS COME OUT OF THE DISPUTE STRONGER BECAUSE THE TWO CONDITIONS HE SET FOR NOT CHALLENGING STRAUSS WITH A BAVARIAN CDU WERE MET: A JOINT CDU/CSU FRAKTION IN THE BUNDESTAG, AND AGREEMENT THAT STRAUSS WOULD NOT FORM A NATIONAL CSU. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CDU CHAIRMAN ALSO MADE SOME IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS TO THE CSU, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS THE PROMISE TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING RIGHT-WING 4TH PARTIES I IN OTHER LAENDER.

7. THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE FDP AND THE SPD IN THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS, ESPECIALLY OVER PENSION PROGRAMS, HELPED TO NUDGE THE UNION PARTIES TOWARDS UNITY. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE UNION PARTIES, BY SQUABBLING AMONG THEMSELVES, WERE MISSING A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE SOCIAL

DEMOCRATS AND THE LIBERALS. IN ADDITION, THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES IN FORMING A COALITION WOULD SEEM TO STRENGTHEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT KOHL'S STRATEGY, WHICH IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT

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THE GOVERNMENT COALITION WILL NOT SURVIVE THE FOUR-YEAR LEGISLATIVE PERIOD, MIGHT SUCCEED.

7. ALLEGED COMMENTS BY LOWER SAXONY MINISTER-PRESIDENT ALBRECHT, DURING A VISIT TO POLAND, THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR A CHANGE IN CDU ATTITUDES TOWARDS "OSTPOLITIK" CREATED CONSTERNATION WITHIN THE UNION PARTIES. ALTHOUGH ALBRECHT LATER DENIED HAVING MADE THEM, THE REMARKS ALMOST THREW A MONKEY WRENCH IN THE CDU/CSU NEGOTIATIONS. THIS LATEST INCIDENT ONCE AGAIN ILLUSTRATES HOW DIVISIVE THE "OSTPOLITIK" QUESTION IS WITHIN THE UNION PARTIES. ANY MOVES TO LIBERALIZE UNION PARTIES' POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE WILL FACE TOUGH SLEDDING UNDER THE NEW FRAKTION AGREEMENT.

8. THE DEBATE AS TO WHO CAME OUT BEST IN THE CDU/CSU DISPUTE WILL CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH KOHL WILL HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY BECAUSE OF THE FRAKTION AGREEMENT, HE IS OBVIOUSLY BETTER OFF WITH A JOINT FRAKTION THAN HE WOULD BE AS CHAIRMAN OF A DIVIDED OPPOSITION. HAD HE FALTERED DURING THE THREE-WEEK PERIOD BETWEEN KREUTH AND YESTERDAY'S DECISION, THERE ARE RIVALS WITHIN THE CDU LEADERSHIP WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN QUICK TO PUSH HIM ASIDE. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION DEMONSTRATED MORE SOLIDARITY AND FIRMNESS IN THIS AFFAIR THAN IT HAS FOR SOME TIME.

9. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION TO FORM A CDU/CSU FRAKTION IN THE 8TH BUNDESTAG WILL BE FOR THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. THE FDP IS PROBABLY BREATHING SOMEWHAT EASIER BECAUSE A SEPARATE CSU MIGHT HAVE UNLEASHED FORCES IN GERMAN POLITICS

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THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN DETRIMENTAL TO THE LIBERALS.
HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE CDU/CSU
FRAKTION WILL MOVE IN A DIRECTION ON "OSTPOLITIK" THAT
WILL MAKE THE UNION PARTIES A MORE ACCEPTABLE PARTNER
FOR THE FDP IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

10. OVER THE INTERMEDIATE TERM, THE DECISION TO RE-
CONSTITUTE THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WILL REDUCE,
IF NOT END, SPECULATION ABOUT THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF
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THE GERMAN PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM. THOUGH THE KREUTH
DECISION WAS PRECIPITATED BY STRAUSS' PENT-UP FRUSTRA-
TIONS AND ANIMOSITIES TOWARD KOHL, IT ALSO REFLECTED

GENUINE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN THE MORE CONSERVATIVE CSU AND THE LIBERAL ELEMENTS- IN THE CDU. THOSE DIFFERENCES HAVE NOT BEEN DISSIPATED, THOUGH THEY ARE CLEARLY LESS IMPORTANT TO THE UNION POLITICIANS THAN THE BENEFITS OF CLOSE COLLABORATION. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE COALITION PARTIES AND THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE DECIDED TO LIVE WITH THEIR DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN TO GO THEIR INDIVIDUAL WAYS. BUT, AS THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE SHOWN, THOSE DIFFERENCES CAN ERUPT TO THE SURFACE AT ANY TIME IN UNPREDICTABLE WAYS.
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